

Recognitions at December 2008 State Board Meeting

The national *No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools* program is run by the U.S. Department of Education. It recognizes public and private K-12 schools that are academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

The schools chosen as National Blue Ribbon recipients are models of excellence that others can emulate. Selection criteria for the program are consistent with the goals of No Child Left Behind. Nominees must meet one of two criteria:

- Schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests.
- Schools that achieve in the top 10 percent of those in the state, regardless of their demographics.

All nominees also had to have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB for the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years to be eligible for recognition. Of more than 137,000 U.S. schools, only 329 earned the prestigious awards this year. Five of this year's award winners are from South Carolina.

These five schools not only met the basic criteria, but also scored higher against those criteria than other South Carolina schools.

- **Lake Carolina Elementary – Richland District Two**

State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex (left) and State Board member Diane Sumpter (far right) congratulate Richland Two superintendent Dr. Steve Hefner (next to Dr. Rex) and school staff members including assistant principals Jan Fickling and Arthur Newton; media specialist and Teacher of the Year Jan Faile; and principal Dr. James Ann Lynch.

Lake Carolina Elementary, located in Northeast Columbia, opened six years ago with approximately 350 students. Currently, the school has an enrollment of 1,048 from diverse cultures and families speaking 17 languages other than English.

The school's success reflects its steadfast commitment to excellence in the face of challenges posed by growth and change. It has rated as Excellent in Absolute student achievement and Excellent in Improvement consistently. Lake Carolina is a Red Carpet School and has won Palmetto Gold awards for high achievement.



- **Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School – Orangeburg District Five**

State Superintendent Jim Rex (left) and State Board member Patsy Pye (far right) congratulate principal Parrie L. Hook, Lartasha Carter and Ella Jefferson of Bethune-Bowman. Minorities represent more than 93 percent of Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School's



student body. Similarly, 93 percent of their students are eligible for free/reduced-priced meals. The school serves 411 young people in grades 7-12.

Bethune-Bowman has experienced dramatic improvement, moving its absolute performance rating from Unsatisfactory in 2003 to Excellent in 2007. It received Palmetto Gold awards for the past three years and was the only high school in the state to be featured on SC ETV in 2008 for excellent student academic achievement and steady improvement. In addition to making significant gains in PACT and HSAP test scores, the school has also increased its graduation rate.

- **Carver Elementary – Florence District One**

State Superintendent Jim Rex (far right) and State Board member Trip DuBard (left) congratulate Florence One superintendent Larry Jackson, principal Dr. Cynthia Young, Teacher of the Year Cindy Smith and teacher Faith Hardison. Carver Elementary is a Title I school with 854 students. Its preschool-fourth grade students come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Carver was one



of the 12 schools selected to present at the Blue Ribbon awards ceremony in Washington in October. Its presentation was on “Adapting Instruction for Diverse Learners.”

At Carver, students, parents, community and staff know that they are valued and appreciated. Many parental and community involvement activities are planned throughout the school year such as a Thanksgiving Festival, Superstar Math and Terrific Kids. The school has an active Parent Teacher Organization and School Improvement Council.

- **East End Elementary – Pickens County**

State Superintendent Jim Rex (far right) and State Board member Phillip Bowers (left) congratulate East End principal Tammy Day, instructional coach Lynn Stanifer, fifth grade teacher Phyllis Venable and guidance counselor Amy Segee. Nestled in the heart of historic downtown Easley, East End Elementary was founded in 1950. It is truly a neighborhood school, serving 698 students in grades K-5.

East End’s mission is “Excelling in Academics, Encouraging Character, Embracing the Community and Seeking Success for All Students.” From 2002 through 2007, the percentage of students living in poverty has risen from 37 percent to 55.5 per cent, a 50 percent increase.



However, East End continues to make gains, with 90 percent of students at every grade level scoring at or above state standards in almost every tested area. East End has also met Adequate Yearly Progress as required by NCLB each year. The school's success is fueled by teachers working as a team, using assessment results and other relevant data to improve student learning and performance.

- **Crestview Elementary – Greenville County**

State Superintendent Jim Rex congratulates Greenville superintendent Dr. Phinnize Fisher; assistant superintendent Dr. Michelle Meekins; and Crestview educators including principal Margaret Thomason; instructional coach Jan Barrett; Teacher of the Year Donna Keller, her mother – LaVon Yandle – and daughter, Holly Tesimale; fifth grade team leader Isaac West; guidance counselor Dr. Louise Napolitano; PTA president Rachel Rodriquez; and fifth grade teacher Kaye Solesbee.

Crestview Elementary is situated in the upstate South Carolina town of Greer. The school serves 728 students in grades K-6. Since 2002, Crestview has experienced dramatic changes in its student population. The school's poverty index increased from 28 percent in 2002, to 65 percent in 2008. The number of students who speak English as a second language also increased, from 17 in 2003-2004 to 91 in 2008.



Regardless of the changes, Crestview's focus on student achievement remains steadfast, and its students have continued to excel academically. The school is focused on teacher quality, starting with a careful, deliberate recruiting and selection process involving multiple interviews with candidates who submit sample lesson plans and demonstrate lessons.